

News

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Workplace Injuries and Illnesses in the Southeast, 2002

A total of 1.0 million nonfatal injuries and illnesses were reported in private industry workplaces in eleven southeastern¹ states during 2002, according to data by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that injuries accounted for more than 90 percent of all recorded cases in each of the southeastern states, similar to the 94 percent reported nationwide. (See table A.) More than 21 percent of the 4.7 million total cases recorded nationwide last year occurred in the Southeast. Because of changes by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to its recordkeeping requirements, the data for 2002 are not comparable with data for prior years. (See the "Background of Survey" for additional information.)

Incidence rates or frequency of total recordable injuries and illnesses per 100 equivalent full-time workers in the Southeast covered a broad range, from 4.0 in North Carolina to 7.2 in Kentucky. (See table 1.) Six southeastern states had rates well below the national average of 5.3 cases -- Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Three states (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia) had rates well above that for the nation, while the two remaining (Alabama and Florida) were close to the U.S. average. (State rates of injury and illness are influenced by a number of factors including the mix of industries located in a state.)

Table A. Injury and illness numbers and rates for the United States and selected southeastern states, private industry, 2002

(numbers in thousands)

Area	Injuries and Illnesses		Injuries		Illnesses	
	Number ¹	Rate	Number ¹	Rate	Number ¹	Rate
United States	4,700.6	5.3	4,406.1	5.0	294.5	0.3
Alabama	66.7	5.2	61.8	4.8	4.9	0.4
Delaware	12.5	4.3	11.8	4.0	0.7	0.3
Florida	245.9	5.1	233.1	4.8	12.8	0.3
Georgia	131.1	4.7	123.8	4.5	7.3	0.3
Kentucky	85.5	7.2	79.9	6.7	5.6	0.5
Maryland	72.5	4.3	70.3	4.2	2.3	0.1
North Carolina	106.7	4.0	99.5	3.8	7.1	0.3
South Carolina	54.3	4.5	50.8	4.2	3.5	0.3
Tennessee	105.3	5.7	96.7	5.2	8.7	0.5
Virginia	101.1	4.3	96.3	4.1	4.9	0.2
West Virginia	29.2	6.3	27.7	6.0	1.5	0.3

¹Numbers may not add up correctly due to rounding.

¹ The Southeast includes the South Atlantic Census division (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the East South Central Census division (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee). Workplace injury and illness data for the District of Columbia and Mississippi are not available.

Florida, which has the largest employment level in the region, recorded the largest number of injury and illness cases at 245,900, followed by Georgia with 131,100 cases. North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia were next; each of these states had just over 100,000 cases. Delaware, which has the smallest employment base among the eleven states, recorded the fewest number of cases, 12,500. West Virginia (29,200) was the only other state in the Southeast with under 50,000 cases. (See table 2.)

Injury and illness cases requiring recuperation away from work, transfer to another job, restricted duties at work, or a combination of these actions, comprised over half of all recordable cases nationwide in 2002 with a rate of 2.8 cases per 100 workers. In the Southeast, states reporting a high incidence rate for cases with days away from work, job transfer, or restriction included Kentucky (4.0 cases per 100 workers) and West Virginia (3.6). At the low end, North Carolina and Virginia both averaged 2.2 cases, and Delaware, 2.3. (See table 1.)

Background of the Survey

The Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses is a Federal/State program in which employer reports were collected from about 182,800 private industry establishments in 2002 and processed by State agencies cooperating with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The survey measures nonfatal injuries and illnesses only. The survey excludes the self-employed; farms with fewer than 11 employees; private households; Federal government agencies; and, for national estimates, employees in State and local government agencies. Some states (including Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia) produce separate estimates combining private industry and State and local government agencies.

Specific state data are available from the following southeastern State agencies participating with BLS in the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.

State agencies	Telephone
Alabama Department of Labor	(334) 242-3460
Delaware Department of Labor	(302) 761-8223
Florida Department of Financial Services	(850) 413-1611
Georgia Department of Labor	(404) 679-0687, ext. 113
Kentucky Department of Labor	(502) 564-3070, ext. 281
Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation	(410) 767-2356
North Carolina Department of Labor	(919) 733-0337
South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation	(803) 734-4298
Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development	(615) 741-1749
Virginia Department of Labor and Industry	(804) 786-6427
West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs	(304) 558-7890

The annual survey provides estimates of the number and frequency (incidence rates) of workplace injuries and illnesses based on logs kept by private industry employers during the year. These records reflect not only the year's injury and illness experience, but also the employer's understanding of which cases are work related under recordkeeping rules promulgated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor. On January 19, 2001, OSHA promulgated revisions to its requirements for recording occupational injuries and illnesses. These revisions became effective January 1, 2002, and are, therefore, reflected in the 2002 survey. Details about the revised requirements, including a summary of the revisions and a comparison between the old and the new requirements, are available from the OSHA Internet site at <http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html> or from OSHA's Office of Public Affairs at 202-693-1999. Due to the revised requirements, the estimates from the 2002 survey are not comparable with those from prior years. The survey was not designed to be able to determine the impact of the revision on the estimates of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses.

Occupational injury and illness data for coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and for railroad activities were provided by the Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and the Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), respectively. Neither of these agencies adopted the revised OSHA recordkeeping requirements for 2002. Therefore, estimates for these industries for 2002 are not comparable with estimates for other industries, but are comparable with estimates for prior years.

The number of injuries and illnesses reported in any year can be influenced by the level of economic activity, working conditions and work practices, worker experience and training, and the number of hours worked.

Establishments are classified in industry categories based on the 1987 *Standard Industrial Classification Manual* (SIC), as defined by the Office of Management and Budget. The survey estimates of occupational injuries and illnesses are based on a scientifically selected probability sample, rather than a census of the entire population. Because the data are based on a sample survey, the injury and illness estimates probably differ from the figures that would be obtained from all units covered by the survey. To determine the precision of each estimate, a standard error was calculated. The standard error defines a range (confidence interval) around the estimate. The approximate 95-percent confidence interval is the estimate plus or minus twice the standard error. The standard error also can be expressed as a percent of the estimate, or the relative standard error. For example, the 95-percent confidence interval for an incidence rate of 6.5 per 100 full-time workers with a relative standard error of 1.0 percent would be 6.5 plus or minus 2 percent (2 times 1.0 percent) or 6.37 to 6.63. One can be 95 percent confident that the "true" incidence rate falls within the confidence interval. The 2002 incidence rate for all occupational injuries and illnesses of 5.3 per 100 full-time workers in private industry has an estimated relative standard error of about 0.7 percent. A relative standard error was calculated for each estimate from the survey and will be available on the BLS Internet site at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/home.htm>, as well as published in a BLS bulletin that is scheduled to be available at a later date.

The data also are subject to nonsampling error. The inability to obtain information about all cases in the sample, mistakes in recording or coding the data, and definition difficulties are examples of nonsampling error in the survey. Nonsampling errors are not measured. However, BLS has implemented quality assurance procedures to minimize nonsampling error in the survey.

The goods-producing sector consists of the following industry divisions: agriculture, forestry, and fishing; mining; construction; and manufacturing. The service-producing sector includes the following industry divisions: transportation and public utilities; trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and services. BLS has generated estimates of injuries and illnesses combined and of injuries alone for nearly all 2-, 3-, and, for manufacturing, 4-digit private sector industries as defined in the 1987 *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*. The information is available from BLS staff on 202-691-6179 and from the BLS Internet site at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/home.htm>.

Table 1. Incidence rates 1/ of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses for the United States and selected southeastern states and private industry divisions, 2002

Industry	United States		Alabama		Delaware		Florida	
	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/
Private Industry 3/	5.3	2.8	5.2	2.6	4.3	2.3	5.1	2.8
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 3/	6.4	3.3	5.4	2.7	4.9	1.7	7.4	3.9
Mining 4/	4.0	2.6	4.7	3.3	4.4	3.7	2.3	1.6
Construction	7.1	3.8	6.2	2.8	4.9	3.1	6.7	3.8
Manufacturing	7.2	4.1	7.8	4.3	4.8	3.0	5.7	3.4
Transportation and public utilities 4/	6.1	4.0	4.4	2.6	5.5	3.4	5.8	4.2
Wholesale and retail trade	5.3	2.7	4.6	2.2	5.7	2.7	5.3	2.9
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1.7	0.8	1.6	0.4	1.5	0.6	2.1	1.0
Services	4.6	2.2	4.1	2.0	3.9	2.0	4.7	2.3

Industry	Georgia		Kentucky		Maryland		North Carolina	
	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/
Private Industry 3/	4.7	2.4	7.2	4.0	4.3	2.4	4.0	2.2
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 3/	5.4	2.5	8.7	4.8	6.5	2.8	4.6	1.2
Mining 4/	2.2	1.4	7.1	5.2	4.3	2.9	2.5	1.5
Construction	6.0	3.4	8.7	5.2	7.3	4.2	4.7	2.3
Manufacturing	6.2	3.4	9.8	5.6	5.8	3.3	5.4	2.9
Transportation and public utilities 4/	5.0	3.3	7.9	5.4	6.1	4.3	4.7	2.9
Wholesale and retail trade	5.1	2.4	6.2	3.2	4.9	2.9	3.9	2.5
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1.4	0.5	1.7	0.7	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.5
Services	3.8	1.6	6.5	3.2	3.2	1.6	3.3	1.7

Industry	South Carolina		Tennessee		Virginia		West Virginia	
	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 2/
Private Industry 3/	4.5	2.4	5.7	3.0	4.3	2.2	6.3	3.6
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 3/	4.2	2.4	4.8	2.1	6.1	2.9	4.2	2.0
Mining 4/	3.2	2.4	--	--	4.7	3.3	9.1	6.3
Construction	4.5	2.5	5.8	3.2	6.1	3.4	6.5	3.3
Manufacturing	5.7	3.0	8.3	4.6	6.1	3.8	8.6	5.3
Transportation and public utilities 4/	4.3	2.6	6.4	4.3	4.9	3.1	5.6	3.8
Wholesale and retail trade	4.5	2.3	5.3	2.8	5.1	2.4	6.3	3.3
Finance, insurance, and real estate	0.9	0.4	1.7	0.7	1.6	0.8	1.6	0.9
Services	4.5	2.3	4.4	1.9	3.0	1.3	5.7	3.2

1/ The incidence rates represent the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as: (N/EH) x 200,000, where

N = number of injuries and illnesses

EH = total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year

200,000 = base for 100 full-time workers

(working 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year).

2/ Total cases away from work also include cases of restricted work activity and job transfer.

3/ Excludes farms with fewer than 11 employees.

4/ Data conforming to OSHA definitions for mining operators in coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and for employers in railroad transportation are provided to BLS by the Mine Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor and the Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Independent mining contractors are excluded from the coal, metal, and nonmetal mining industries. These data do not reflect the changes OSHA made to its recordkeeping requirements effective January 1, 2002; therefore estimates for these industries are not comparable with estimates for other industries.

-- Indicates data not available.

Table 2. Number of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses for the United States and selected southeastern states and private industry divisions, 2002

(in thousands)

Industry	United States		Alabama		Delaware		Florida	
	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/
Private Industry 2/	4,700.6	2,494.3	66.7	33.7	12.5	6.7	245.9	134.9
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 2/	96.3	49.3	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.1	10.0	5.3
Mining 3/	23.0	15.1	0.4	0.3	--	--	0.2	0.1
Construction	417.7	226.8	5.5	2.5	1.1	0.7	25.8	14.4
Manufacturing	1,159.5	656.4	25.0	13.6	2.4	1.5	25.0	14.9
Transportation and public utilities 3/	382.7	251.8	3.9	2.3	0.8	0.5	18.9	13.6
Wholesale and retail trade	1,227.7	625.6	16.2	8.0	4.0	1.9	78.7	43.2
Finance, insurance, and real estate	115.4	52.3	1.3	0.3	0.6	0.3	9.1	4.3
Services	1,278.4	617.1	13.7	6.5	3.4	1.8	78.4	38.9

Industry	Georgia		Kentucky		Maryland		North Carolina	
	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/
Private Industry 2/	131.1	65.6	85.5	47.3	72.5	40.5	106.7	56.8
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 2/	2.1	1.0	1.2	0.6	1.3	0.6	2.0	0.5
Mining 3/	0.2	0.1	1.6	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Construction	11.0	6.3	6.3	3.8	11.3	6.4	9.3	4.6
Manufacturing	31.6	17.3	27.5	15.9	9.5	5.3	35.2	18.9
Transportation and public utilities 3/	12.4	8.2	7.8	5.3	5.9	4.1	7.8	4.8
Wholesale and retail trade	41.3	19.0	20.1	10.4	21.4	12.5	27.6	15.5
Finance, insurance, and real estate	2.8	1.0	1.1	0.5	1.5	0.6	1.9	0.8
Services	29.8	12.6	20.0	9.7	21.6	11.0	22.8	11.5

Industry	South Carolina		Tennessee		Virginia		West Virginia	
	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/	Total cases	Total cases away from work 1/
Private Industry 2/	54.3	28.8	105.3	56.0	101.1	52.8	29.2	16.8
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 2/	0.7	0.4	0.8	0.4	1.8	0.9	0.1	0.1
Mining 3/	0.1	(4)	--	--	0.4	0.3	2.1	1.4
Construction	4.4	2.5	6.3	3.5	11.8	6.6	1.9	1.0
Manufacturing	16.9	9.1	36.8	20.4	20.8	13.0	6.2	3.8
Transportation and public utilities 3/	3.9	2.4	10.1	6.8	7.7	4.8	1.9	1.3
Wholesale and retail trade	14.7	7.5	26.4	14.2	29.7	14.1	8.0	4.2
Finance, insurance, and real estate	0.7	0.3	1.9	0.8	2.9	1.5	0.4	0.2
Services	12.8	6.7	22.8	9.9	26.0	11.6	8.6	4.8

1/ Total cases away from work also include cases of restricted work activity and job transfer.

2/ Excludes farms with fewer than 11 employees.

3/ Data conforming to OSHA definitions for mining operators in coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and for employers in railroad transportation are provided to BLS by the Mine Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, and the Federal Retirement Administration, U. S. Department of Transportation. Independent mining contractors are excluded from the coal, metal, and nonmetal mining industries. These data do not reflect the changes OSHA made to its recordkeeping requirements effective January 1, 2002; therefore estimates for these industries are not comparable with estimates for other industries.

4/ Fewer than 50 cases.

-- Indicates data not available.